

Dear Commissioners:

Stop hidden phone fees so I can truly compare prices of phone services. I support the petition filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates and endorsed by other consumer advocacy organizations. CG Docket No. 04-208, Petition for Declaratory Ruling Regarding Truth-In-Billing and Billing Format, is long overdue.

Phone bills should be truthful and easy to understand. My grandparents have had several problems with their phone bill. Charges being added for services they didn't request then taken off at their request, and the next month, there was the charge again. A lot of older people are easy to confuse and I believe that is what a lot of companies, not just phone companies, rely on to get more profit. A lot of these people live on fixed incomes and the only concern of the phone companies is how to get more money from people that need that money to survive. These are sleazy practices and I believe making charges easier to understand is a good first step in counteracting such unscrupulous practices.

Because this practice is tolerated by the FCC, long distance and wireless phone companies are able to hide the true cost of service. These add-ons make the advertised price of service significantly less than the amount of the check I have to write each month to pay the bill. Competition will not work if consumers cannot accurately compare prices when shopping for service.

Many states are stepping up to address this problem. They should be allowed to proceed. However, the FCC shouldn't shirk its responsibility, nor limit states from doing more.

The FCC should immediately grant the NASUCA petition to investigate billing practices, and prohibit phone and wireless companies from imposing separate monthly fees, line items or surcharges unless expressly mandated by law or the charge is expressly authorized by a governmental authority.